

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EA-07 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
SS-15 USIA-06 DHA-02 OMB-01 ACDA-07 TRSE-00 /074 W
-----055486 100146Z /70

R 091226Z AUG 77

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5290
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD
AMEMBASSY LAHORE
AMEMBASSY KARACHI
AMCONSUL BOMBAY
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA
AMCONSUL MADRAS
AMEMBASSY KABUL
AMEMBASSY DACCA
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L NEW DELHI 11230

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PK, IN
SUBJ: MEA VIEW OF PAKISTAN DEVELOPMENTS

SUMMARY: AT MEA, THE THINKING IS THAT ZIA WILL CARRY
THROUGH WITH HIS ELECTION PLEDGE DESPITE OPPOSITION
IN SOME PAK MILITARY QUARTERS. THE INDIANS CLAIM
THAT THEIR GOOD BEHAVIOR TOWARD PAKISTAN IN ITS
TIME OF TROUBLE HAS WON PLAUDITS FROM ZIA HIMSELF.
PROSPECTS FOR A BHUTTO COMEBACK ARE RATED DIM. VAJPAYEE
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IS PLANNING AN EARLY GOOD WILL VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN AS
PART OF THE NEW GOI'S GOOD NEIGHBOR POLICY. END SUMMARY

1. MEA JOINT SECRETARY (PAKISTAN/AFGHANISTAN)
I.P. SINGH AND POL COUNSELOR REVIEWED LATEST PAK
DEVELOPMENTS AUGUST 8. DISCUSSION ALSO TOUCHED ON
REPORTED PLANS OF FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE TO VISIT

AFGHANISTAN IN NEAR FUTURE.

2. GENERAL ZIA'S INTENTIONS: SINGH SAID THAT ALTHOUGH GENERAL ZIA'S DETERMINATION TO HOLD ELECTIONS ON OCTOBER 18 AND HAND OVER POWER THEREAFTER TO A CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT OFTEN SEEMED "TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE", MEA REMAINED CONVINCED THAT HE INTENDED TO DO JUST THAT. SINGH ADDED, HOWEVER, THAT THE INDIANS UNDERSTOOD THERE WERE IMPORTANT ELEMENTS IN THE PAK MILITARY WHO WISHED TO THE ELECTIONS POSTPONED. HE THOUGHT ZIA WOULD PREVAIL OVER THEM. HE SAID HE THOUGHT ZIA'S POSITION ON ELECTIONS WAS UNDERSCORED BY THE GENERAL'S REPEATED INSISTENCE THAT HIS WAS AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT. THIS, HE SAID, WAS REFLECTED IN THE WAY THE GOP CARRIED OUT ITS BILATERAL RELATIONS WITH THE GOI, WITHHOLDING ACTION ON EVEN INSIGNIFICANT ITEMS ON ROUNDS THAT DECISIONS HAD TO AWAIT THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE ELECTED GOVERNMENT. HE NOTED THAT ZIA'S PRESTIGE WAS NOW COMMITTED TO ELECTIONS, AND THAT ANY BACKING AWAY WOULD SERVE TO DAMAGE HIM. ASKED ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF VIOLENCE PROVIDING A REASON OR A PRETEXT FOR POSTPONEMENT, SINGH MAINTAINED THAT SUCH VIOLENCE COULD ONLY TAKE PLACE WITH THE CONSENT OF THE MILITARY ITSELF.

3. INDO-PAK RELATIONS: SINGH SAID THAT THE GOI CONTINUED TO DEAL WITH PAK DEVELOPMENTS IN A VERY CONFIDENTIAL

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CAREFUL WAY. WHEN THE POL COUNSELOR REMARKED THAT HE HAD BEEN TOLD BY THE PAK EMBASSY HERE THAT THE GOP HAD NO CAUSE FOR COMPLAINT ABOUT THE INDIANS' APPROACH, SINGH REJOINED THAT ZIA HIMSELF HAD EXPRESSED TO INDIAN AMBASSADOR BAJPAI HIS OWN APPRECIATION FOR THE GOI STANCE. SINGH SAID THE GOI WISHED BOTH

TO AVOID PROVOCATION AND TO AVOID ALLOWING ITSELF TO BE PROVOKED. THE PAKS, FOR THEIR PART, HAD ALSO AVOIDED ANY PROVOCATIVE MOVES. IN A BRIEF DISCUSSION OF THE RECENT FIRING INCIDENT IN THE POONCH SECTOR (NEW DELHI 10753), SINGH SAID THAT AT FIRST THE INDIANS HAD FEARED THAT THE PAKS WERE TRYING TO CAUSE TROUBLE, PERHAPS WITH A VIEW TOWARD CREATING A SITUATION IN WHICH ELECTIONS COULD BE POSTPONED. INVESTIGATION SOON PROVED, HE SAID, THAT THE INCIDENT WAS OF NO CONSEQUENCE.

4. SINGH SAID HE EXPECTED THE PPP WOULD STAY IN THE CAMPAIGN, THOUGH HE RATED BHUTTO'S COMEBACK PROSPECTS AS DIM. HE SAID HE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE MILITARY WAS WORKING AGAINST BHUTTO: THE COURT CASES AND

PRESS CHARGES AGAINST THE PM WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE MILITARY'S APPROVAL. HE DID NOT SPECULATE ABOUT WHAT MIGHT COME AFTER OCTOBER 18. DISCUSSING THE CAMPAIGN BHUTTO WOULD WAGE, SINGH SAID IT WOULD HAVE A SIGNIFICANT POPULIST AND ANTI-US CONTENT. HE RULED OUT BHUTTO'S TRYING TO REVIVE HIS OLD ANTI-INDIAN REPUTATION AS A CAMPAIGN PLOY. IN SINGH'S VIEW, THE EX-PM WAS TOO VULNERABLE TO CHARGES OF SOFTNESS TOWARD INDIA DURING HIS YEARS IN OFFICE TO UNDERTAKE THAT LINE.

4. VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN: SINGH CONFIRMED PRESS REPORTS THAT FOREIGN MINISTER VAJPAYEE WAS PLANNING A VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN IN THE NEAR FUTURE. HE SAID THAT NO DATE
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HAD YET BEEN FIXED, BUT MENTIONED LATE AUGUST OR EARLY SEPTEMBER AS POSSIBILITIES (THOUGH BOTH FALL IN RAMZAN). LIKE A VISIT TO BURMA PLANNED FOR EARLIER IN AUGUST, THE KABUL JOURNEY WOULD BE A GOODWILL TRIP, ONE IN A SERIES THE NEW PM IS MAKING AS PART OF THE GOI'S EFFORTS TO IMPROVE RELATIONS WITH ITS Y UTH ASIAN NEIGHBORS. SINGH AGREED WITH THE POL COUNSELOR'S OBERVATION THAT A VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN AT THIS TIME COULD BE MISUNDERSTOOD OR DELIBERATELY DISTORTED IN PAKISTAN. HE SAID THAT THIS ASPECT HAD BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, AND THAT CONSIDERATION HAD BEEN GIVEN TO THE IDEA OF POSTPONING TILL AFTER THE PAK ELECTION. THE INDIANS HAD CONCLUDED, HE SAID, THAT GIVEN AFGHAN INTEREST IN THE VISIT AND SEASONAL FACTORS, IT WOULD BE BETTER TO GO AHEAD WITH AN EARLY JOURNEY.
GOHEEN

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01-Jan-1994 12:00:00 am
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, FOREIGN RELATIONS, NATIONAL ELECTIONS
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Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1977NEWDE11230
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D770287-0172
Format: TEL
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1977/newtext/t19770882/aaaacrbo.tel
Line Count: 152
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
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Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
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Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1663675
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: MEA VIEW OF PAKISTAN DEVELOPMENTS SUMMARY: AT MEA, THE THINKING IS THAT ZIA WILL CARRY THROUGH WITH HIS ELECTION PLEDGE DESPITE OPPOSITIO
TAGS: MOPS, PINS, PINT, PK, IN, (ZIA UL-HAQ, MOHAMMAD)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/277e635f-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
22 May 2009
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009